



# Human.Net



Issue 31 –June 2012

Keeping you up to date with the latest news on Human Resource issues and developments as well as Association news.

## Contents

1. Welcome Note
2. Bright idea
3. HR in Black & White
4. HR on screen
5. Book Review
6. Makes you think!
7. HR Forthcoming Events
8. Editorial Team (for feedback)

## Interesting Quotes

*“Every now and then go away...for when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer.”*

*-- Leonardo da Vinci --*

## 1. Welcome Note from the Editor

Dear Readers,

In this summer edition of HumanNet we will be sharing insights regarding different issues that affect us all in some way. John F. Kennedy once said "when you have seven percent unemployed, you have ninety-three percent working." This clearly indicates to us HR professionals that despite the current 10% unemployment rate, something unique for the Cyprus context, remaining positive and being willing to see things from a different perspective is essential if we are to effectively address the difficulties and challenges we face.

We all know that change is the only constant. By welcoming change and identifying and focusing on the opportunities it brings we significantly increase the probability of turning a breakdown into a breakthrough.

We always have a choice, in everything we choose, in what we believe, do and say. Even in the most difficult circumstances always choose to work in a way that is ethical, true to your personal values and focused on teamwork.

We hope you enjoy this edition of HumanNet and that you will all have a refreshing summer and a constructive and successful 2nd quarter to the year!

*Olympia Fantis*

## 2. Bright Idea

**Rebuilding Morale** - Creating a happy, committed workforce

Team morale can suffer for many reasons, including downsizing, difficulty with co-workers, poor leadership or communication. If you suspect that your team's morale is not what it should be, there are several strategies that you can use to rebuild it.

First, focus on your own morale. Then identify why team morale is low, and choose appropriate strategies for rebuilding it. These can include:

1. **Reconnecting with your team:** develop good relationships, reward by saying "Thank you", practice management by "walking around", develop your emotional intelligence and provide regular feedback.
2. **Developing your team:** offer opportunities for learning and development, and provide training.
3. **Improving the workplace:** Do your best to improve the offices and other rooms your team uses every day.
4. **Improving communication:** it's important to give people timely and accurate information, as well as listen actively to what they have to say and respond in a timely manner to questions or concerns. There is nothing worse than letting rumours spread with regards to bad communication affecting morale.
5. **Setting measurable goals:** Morale can fall when your people are unclear about what they should be doing, or what your expectations are. Ensure your employees are aware of the organisation's mission and vision, and how each of them contribute towards these by setting clear team and individual targets.
6. **Rebuilding confidence:** One great way to do this is to give them more autonomy to make decisions. Delegate tasks and responsibilities, and push them to work towards challenging but achievable goals. And when someone on your team has a success, celebrate it!
7. **Focusing on talent management:** use talent management strategies, like job crafting for example, to ensure that the talents and skills of your high flyers and top performers are fully utilised .
8. **Motivating your people effectively:** You can stimulate high performance through providing interesting and challenging work, helping people set and achieve meaningful goals, and recognizing and rewarding high performance in ways that are valued by each individual.



## 3. HR in Black & White

### Cyprus GDP drops by 0.3%

According to the Flash Estimate compiled by the Statistical Service, GDP in Cyprus dropped by 0.3% during the first quarter of 2012 compared with the previous quarter. On a year-to-year basis, Cyprus GDP during the first quarter of the current year decreased by 1.4% compared with the corresponding period of 2011.

Negative growth rates were recorded in the secondary sector of the economy (Construction, Manufacturing, Electricity), as well as in the sectors of Trade and Transport. Positive growth rates were presented by the sectors of Banking and Services (Public Administration, Education, Health and other services).

A decrease in GDP had a direct impact on unemployment rate, especially in the sectors where negative growth is more evident.

### Jobless rate hits a record of 10.1%

Unemployment continues to spiral out of control, hitting a record of 10.1% in April, an increase of 0.1% compared to March, according to seasonally adjusted data released by Eurostat. On a year-to-year basis, Cyprus unemployment rate recorded the third highest increase in the EU, after Spain and Greece, demonstrating an increase from 6.9% to 10.1%.

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service, the unemployed persons registered at the District Labour Offices on the last day of May 2012, reached 34.162 people. Based on the seasonally adjusted data that shows the trend of unemployment, the number of registered unemployed for May 2012 increased to 36.313 people, in comparison to 35.402 in the previous month.

Compared to the same period last year (May 2011), an increase of 8.112 people or 31,1% was recorded which was mainly observed in the sectors of construction (an increase of 1.899 unemployed persons), trade (an increase of 1.899), manufacturing (an increase of 1.244), public administration (an increase of 694), accommodation and food service activities (an increase of 625), as well as to newcomers in the labour market where an increase of 411 unemployed persons was recorded.

Unemployment continues to be particularly high amongst individuals under the age of 25 with 28.8% in March 2012, compared with the 18.8% of the previous year. However, the majority of people without jobs are recorded between the ages of 30 and 39 (7,881) followed by the age group 40 - 49 (6,972).

In relation to gender, unemployment reached 10.9% and 9.2% for men and women, respectively. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in Nicosia with 11,918 jobless people, followed by Limassol with 9,303.

Further statistical data suggests that most people (11,648) have been unemployed between 15 days and three months. Around 8,000 have been unemployed for three to six months, while around 7,000 have remained without a job for six months to a year. The number of unemployed beyond 12 months was 3,443.

It is also observed that the highest number of registered unemployed individuals belong to the elementary occupational category (7,246), followed by craftsmen category (5,468) service and sales workers (5,441) and clerks (5,366).

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate is rising high in the entire eurozone, reaching 10.9% in March, driven by rises in Italy and Spain, equaling the record high of 15 years ago.

According to Howard Archer, economist at IHS Global Insight, "It now looks odds-on that the eurozone unemployment rate will move appreciably above 11.0% over the coming months with an ever growing danger that it will reach 11.5%". The European Commission's spokesman on employment, Jonathan Todd, described the latest jobless figures as very worrying. He explains, "They confirm the urgency of creating more dynamic labour markets and the urgency of putting in place concrete measures to support the creation not only of more jobs, but better and more sustainable jobs".

Currently the Commission is working with member states to achieve job-rich growth measures and they plan to issue country-specific recommendations aimed at boosting employment.

### Subsidies for care

Labour Minister Sotiroulla Charalambous, stated that Cyprus was considered to have one of the highest costs in the EU when it comes to care, especially childcare. As a result, women who take care of dependants such as a child under 12, a disabled or elderly relative, have more difficulty being employed. Consequently, in the beginning of May, the Labour Ministry announced a new scheme to help unemployed women, who are carers of children, pensioners and disabled people, to find work.

Labour Minister Sotiroulla Charalambous commented that under the scheme, women can seek employment and they will be entitled to state funds to assist with caring for their dependants, provided that their monthly salary does not exceed €2,100.

According to the minister, the state will be funding the cost of care, based on their income. If an applicant earns up to €950 a month, they will be given a maximum of €260 towards childcare and €200 for an elderly dependant.

For salaries ranging between €951 and €1,450, care will be funded to the tune of €200 for childcare and €150 for a pensioner. If they earn between €1,451 and €2,100, the state will give a maximum of €130 towards childcare and €100 for an elderly dependant.

The aim, according to the Minister of Labour was to reconcile family with professional life. This scheme will cost €3.17 million in total and is expected to help some 1,200 women.

### Job Scheme for the long-term jobless

The government committed to an incentive scheme targeting the long-term unemployed and young people who are out of work.

Under the scheme, private-sector businesses and local administration authorities are encouraged to hire people aged 28 and over who have been out of a job for more than seven months (long-term unemployed) and/or persons aged up to 29 who have been jobless for three to six months. The government will subsidize the scheme to the tune of 50% and up to 65% for jobs in the construction sector.

To be eligible for subsidies, employers must have no outstanding dues to the Inland Revenue Department or to social security, and must not have fired staff over the past eight months. Also, under the scheme, employers will not be allowed to hire first-degree relatives.

Around 1,000 people are expected to find jobs under the scheme.



## 4. HR On Screen



*Pushing Tin* is a 1999 comedy-drama film starring John Cusack (as Nick "The Zone" Falzone), an arrogant air traffic controller, and Billy Bob Thornton (as Russel Bell) his nemesis at work. The film is directed by Mike Newell and also stars Cate Blanchett as Nick's wife (Connie) and Angelina Jolie as Russel's young wife (Mary).

Nick and his colleagues work at TRACON in New York, one of the busiest airspaces in the USA and they take a lot of pride in the fact that they can handle the intense stress of being air controllers. A quiet and confident new employee, Russell Bell, a veteran traffic controller, joins the team. Very soon he shows them that he is extremely good at handling the hectic workload by using unorthodox and risky methods. Nick feels threatened by this new colleague who seems to be excelling at what seems to be everything and characterises Bell as a loose cannon to his supervisor, after finding out that he once stood on a runway to be violently propelled by a landing commercial airliner's jetwash (something that was caught on camera).

On a chance encounter, Nick bumps into Russell's young and sexy wife Mary and ends up sleeping with her. Afterwards, Mary lets Nick know that she immediately told Russell about what happened between them, and that the confession was actually good for their marriage. Afraid of Russell's reaction, Nick confronts him at work, and can't understand why he doesn't respond with anger or resentment to the situation. In the meantime, Nick's wife is starting to like Russell, and Nick becomes more and more afraid that Russell will try to avenge him by sleeping with her.

While out of town for his father-in-law's funeral, Nick can't bring himself to lie to his wife when Connie challenges him to say that he was always faithful to her and during their flight back to New York, Connie tells Nick that she has also slept with Russell. As their plane is approaching the airport in New York the pilot makes an odd turn, making Nick to think that it's Russell's way of harassing him by directing the plane into a dangerous storm on purpose.

Nick goes into work to confront Russell, but shortly after someone calls TRACON with a bomb threat. The building is evacuated but the two colleague-competitors, Nick and Russell, volunteer to stay behind to handle the scary situation of landing all the planes before the alleged bomb is set to go off in 26 minutes. Successfully routing all planes except one that has lost radio contact, Nick leaves the building as the bomb deadline fast approaches. Russell however, stays inside and manages to make contact with the plane by calling one of its passengers via Airfone. The threat turned out to be a hoax but Russell is considered a hero for making the effort, having stayed behind. However, he shortly after resigns from his job unexpectedly and moves to Colorado with his wife.

Connie leaves Nick, whose performance at work deteriorates as he no longer feels cool at work and in control of his personal life. The once arrogant controller finds himself responsible for two mid-air near collisions in one shift and is sent home before he loses his job. In the meantime, he finds out the true circumstances of Russell ordering the diversion of his flight back from the funeral, which was to give priority to a plane with a medical emergency on board. So Nick drives out to Colorado on an impulse to make amends with Russell.

Upon meeting Russell, Nick asks for his advice on how to get his personal life back on track. In order to show him instead of telling him how, Russell brings Nick to an aeroplane runway so that he too can experience being caught in a landing aircraft's turbulence. The two of them do the stunt together, something which has a profound effect on Nick who thanks Russell for the experience. The film ends with Nick returning to New York, where he regains his work performance, and gets back together with his wife.

An entertaining film that touches upon HR themes which we are sure we have all been through at some point such as stress at work, work-life balance, peer rivalry / competition at work and employee relations. However we can see that in the end camaraderie and team spirit ALWAYS win!



## 5. Book Review



**The Coaching Manual**, the Definitive Guide to the Process, Principles and Skills of Personal Coaching  
 Author: **Julie Starr**  
 Publisher: **Prentice Hall Business**  
 ISBN 978-0-273-74058-2

Many may wonder, why read this book?

Maybe you want to learn about coaching or begin coaching others. Perhaps you are already coaching and are ready to develop your skills and knowledge further. Maybe you work in the field of learning and development and are interested in what coaching has to offer. Or perhaps you are considering engaging a coach for yourself or for your company and want to know what you are getting into. Whatever the reason, this book provides you with a practical, enjoyable way to learn while you read. Managers will find relevant information and guidance whereas from the clients' point of view, it offers an insight into coaching practices that will support someone as a coachee.

The Coaching Manual explains the principles and approaches of personal coaching and shows you how to apply them in any coaching situation; from business coaching for performance, to more holistic life coaching. For those already in the coaching profession, it offers new insights and fresh ideas. For the new ones into the game, the manual is a practical guide to begin with. For the busy manager it provides techniques to use with their team.

The book covers the principles and beliefs that underpin coaching, describes the actual process step by step and gives fresh perspectives on the skills coaches need to develop. There is also the structure of a typical coaching conversation, to help one navigate from the first "hello" through to the "farewell" stage. It also offers a practical guidance on what works and what may simply get in the way of great coaching. In addition, the tips it offers can be added in a new practitioner's toolkit and help them gain even more confidence to get started.

The author, Julie Starr, is a coach and consultant with a well-established coaching practice who actively works to encourage the growth of coaching within businesses. Her methods, models and approaches are used to develop great coaching practice around the world. Julie is convinced that when we support the development of each other, we are helping to create so much more, and there lies the true possibility of coaching.

*Contributed by Yota Tsiokri*

## 6. Makes you think!



## 7. HR Forthcoming Events

### CYPRUS:

28th June 2012

CyHRMA Annual General Meeting

Press House, 60-62 V. Voulgaroktonou Street, Old Nicosia, 1010 Nicosia

## 8. Editorial Team of this issue

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